

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 3-18, and 20-34 are pending in this application after this amendment. Claims 2 and 19 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter included therein. Claims 1 and 18 are independent. In light of the amendments and remarks made herein, Applicants respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

By this amendment, Applicants have amended the claims to conform to U.S. patent practice.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Sklarew* (USP 5,157,737) in view of *Dymetman* (USP 6,330,976). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for indicating claims 2-17 and 19-34 include allowable subject matter.

By this amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 18 to include the allowable subject matter of claims 2 and 19, respectively. These amendments are being made without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to timely advance prosecution of the present application.

In an Interview conducted on December 4, 2003, the parties agreed that the cited references, either alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the claimed invention of independent claims 1 and 18, as pending prior to the amendments made herein. When questioned about the rejection being maintained in the outstanding Official Action, the

Examiner indicated that an error was made and that the outstanding rejection should have been withdrawn.

In an effort to further prosecution, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 18 with the allowable subject matter of claims 2 and 19, respectively. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are now in proper form for allowance.

**Conclusion**

It is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Catherine M. Voisinet (Reg. No. 52,327) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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By

  
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